

FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE – February 23, 2009

Public Testimony by Kate Eiseman & Lauren Minichino

Ms. Eiseman:

Senator Daily, Representative Staples, members of the Finance Committee, My name is Kate Eisemann am here to testify on Senate Bill 933 – and more specifically, Section 7 dealing with the Film and Digital Media Incentive Program. I've been in the film industry for the 25 years. I am a member of the Directors Guild of America.

I was raised in Westport and went through public schools there. I have a communications degree from the University of Hartford. While at U of H I worked on my first television commercial and fell in love with the industry. There was no substantial film industry to pursue in CT so I then moved to New York City where I worked and prospered on movies and television commercials.

I had a child in 1999 and I had always wanted to move back to CT to raise my family, but I needed to stay where my industry was. I moved anyway in 2003 and continued to commute miserably to NY, having to leave my family for many hours each day. I was lucky enough to get a staff job with the Director Barry Levinson in 2006 (a Connecticut resident.)

Shortly thereafter Barry decided to do his next film in CT. Nobody made movies in CT! That film was What Just Happened with Robert DeNiro and Sean Penn. Since then I have worked on 6 major motion pictures all around the state.

Now working as a location scout I have found the perfect blend to mix my years of film experience with my love of CT in finding diverse locations for these films to shoot in. I have been delighted to pay many thousands of dollars to business, churches, home owners, hotels and all kinds of vendors to use them as filming and support locations.

Most importantly the effect of the film industry here is palpable. Every Mayor, First Selectman, Police Chief, Fireman resident or business owner I have met in my travels is so proud to have films being made in our state. The people of the state have welcomed this industry which continues to come back and spend great amounts of money here and employ local people like me. I urge you to keep the Motion Picture and TV tax credit program, thank you.

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Ms. Minichino:

Good Afternoon Senator Daily, Representative Staples, members of the Finance Committee, My name is Lauren Minichino, I am a resident of Wallingford and I am here to testify on the Film and Digital Media Incentive Program as well.

I was born and raised right here in Connecticut. When it was time to go off to college, I chose to stay in Connecticut because I love my home state and family so much. During my studies, I found my calling, I wanted to help make movies. When I finished college in 2001, there was no work to be had in film and television in Connecticut. I never planned on leaving this state, but I knew I had no other option if I wanted to pursue my dream. I relocated to Maryland and began my career. I worked in Locations and after 4 years, I realized I was in love with my job, but not with Maryland, I wanted to go home, but it just wasn't an option.

In July of 2006, with the passing of the Digital Media & Motion Picture Tax Credit, my prayers were answered. Within one month I moved back to Connecticut, and within 4 months, due to the most steady work I have ever had, my fiancé moved here from Pennsylvania and we bought our first home. Since then I have worked on six feature films and numerous television projects. This amazing tax incentive has given me everything I have ever dreamed of: a career, a home of my own and my family and friends all nearby. I love my life and I am blessed to call Connecticut my home and work state. I beseech you to keep this tax incentive and to give this industry the time it needs to grow and mature; and give people like me the ability to have a career we love in the state we proudly call home.

Thank you.